

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for detecting an analyte containing a haem moiety within a sample, the method comprising:

a) contacting the sample with one or more magnetic beads having immobilised thereon a specific binding partner for the analyte and allowing the analyte to bind to the specific binding partner;

b) separating the magnetic beads from the sample;

c) subjecting the beads to alkaline conditions sufficient to release the haem moieties from the beads moiety from the analyte, and thereby from the one or more magnetic beads, but not to extract inorganic iron from the one or more magnetic beads; and

d) detecting the released haem moieties moiety, and thereby detecting the analyte containing the haem moiety, using a luminol chemiluminescent assay procedure.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein step (c) is conducted within a pH range of from 12.5 to 13.5.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the beads are resuspended in step (c) and step (d) is carried out directly on the bead suspension.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the beads are resuspended in step (c); after step (c) “,” the magnetic beads are separated “,” from the suspension; and step (d) is carried out on the separated suspension.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein between step (b) and step (c), the magnetic beads are resuspended in a washing solution, and thereafter, separated from the washing solution.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the analyte is a spore.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6 wherein the analyte is a *Bacillus* spore.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein in step (c) the alkaline conditions are sufficient to release haem moieties without extracting inorganic iron from the beads.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein in step (d) luminol is added to and incubated with the released haem moieties, and oxidant added in a sufficient amount to generate a signal.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the amount of oxidant present is sufficient to oxidise all of the luminol. “.”

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10 wherein the oxidant is sodium perborate or hydrogen peroxide.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the specific binding partner for the analyte is an antibody or binding fragment thereof.

14. (Withdrawn) A kit for detecting an analyte in a sample, wherein the analyte contains a haem moiety or is labelled with a haem moiety, comprising magnetic beads, luminol or functional chemiluminescent derivatives thereof and a working solution having a pH within the range of from 12.5 to 13.5.

15. (Withdrawn) The kit of claim 14 wherein the magnetic beads are coated with a specific binding partner for an analyte.

16. (Withdrawn) The kit of claim 15 wherein the specific binding partner is an antibody.

17. (Withdrawn) The kit of claim 14, which further comprises an oxidant.

18. (Withdrawn) The kit of claim 17 wherein the oxidant is sodium perborate or hydrogen peroxide.

19. (Withdrawn) A method for detecting an analyte labelled with a haem moiety within a sample, the method comprising:

a) contacting the sample with one or more magnetic beads having immobilised thereon a specific binding partner for the analyte and allowing the analyte to bind to the specific binding partner;

b) separating the magnetic beads from the sample;

c) subjecting the beads to alkaline conditions sufficient to release the haem moiety from the beads; and

d) detecting the released haem moiety using a luminol chemiluminescent assay procedure.

20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 19 wherein the haem moiety is a horseradish peroxidase labelled antibody specific for the analyte.